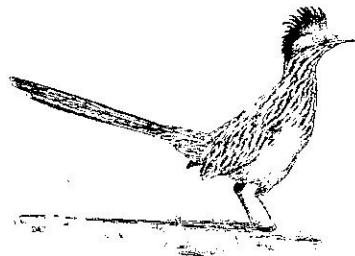


MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

ROADRUNNER
RAMBLINGSCelebrating
20
Years

Volume 20, No. 2 March/April 1998

HUMMINGBIRD APPRECIATION DAY

by Lorraine Shulte

On April 18, we will have a special day for Hummingbird Awareness at the Museum of Natural History in Mesilla Valley Mall from 10 AM to 2 PM. There will be exhibits, posters, videos, feeders, and handouts. A "giant, live hummingbird" will also be present! Mesilla Valley Audubon Society members will answer questions and suggest reading material for those who want to learn more about hummingbirds. Bring your friends, children, and neighbors for an "awareness" experience of these fascinating birds. ☺

IS YOUR BIRD FEEDER SAFE?

by Storm Sermay

Most of us who enjoy wildlife, and particularly birds, also enjoy bird feeding. It is important that we ensure the safety of our feeders to make sure that we do not unknowingly contribute to the spread of disease.

According to an article by Janet M. Ruth and Milton Friend of the National Wildlife Health Center, USGS Biological Resources Division, there are five diseases that commonly affect bird species: Salmonellosis (from food contaminated by infected droppings), Trichomoniasis (from contaminated food or water), Aspergillosis (inhaled fungus causing bronchitis and pneumonia), Avian pox (a viral infection causing wartlike growths), and Mycoplasmosis (from airborne droplets, dust, or direct contact causing an infection of the eye membranes.)

Ruth and Friend suggest the following steps to help prevent the spread of disease at our feeders. Avoid crowding by providing ample feeder space. Keep your feeder area clean of waste food and droppings. Use feeders without sharp points since even a small scratch can allow bacteria and viruses to infect an otherwise healthy bird. Clean and disinfect feeders regularly. Use one part liquid household chlorine bleach to nine parts tepid water. Make enough solution to immerse an empty feeder completely for two to three minutes. Allow to air dry. Once or twice a month should do, but clean weekly if you notice sick birds. Discard food that smells musty, is wet, or has fungus. Keep rodents out of stored food as they can spread bird diseases. Encourage others to follow these precautions.

Follow these precautions and we will all be able to enjoy healthy birds at our feeders. ☺

CELEBRATING
OUR 20th YEAR!

Mark your calendars for the following events

March 26 - April 18.**Bird Identification Class**

Includes 3 classroom sessions and 3 field trips (18 hours for \$39). Contact Doña Ana Branch Community College to enroll. 527-7527

April 18. Hummingbird Awareness Day.

Mesilla Valley Mall, 10 AM - 10 PM (See pg. 1)

April 25. Earth Day Celebration.

Young Park, 10 AM - 3 PM. Information booth and activities for children. (See pg. 2)

May 9. Birdathon.

Our 24 hour birdwatching marathon. (See pg. 2)

May 20. Twentieth Anniversary Potluck Dinner.

6 PM at the residence of Lorraine and John Shulte. David Henderson of the Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe will speak. (Details in next newsletter)

Continuing throughout the year.

Audubon Adventures programs, coming to more schools in our area this year.



EARTH DAY IS COMING

by Bill Jacobson

MVAS will participate in the annual Earth Day celebration on Saturday, April 25, from 10 AM until 3 PM at Young Park. Our booth will focus on information about the Chapter and activities for children. Activities will include constructing pinecone bird feeders, periodic drawings for neat prizes (hummingbird feeders, patches, etc.), and an appearance by a "hummingbird". For a minimal fee, children can have their picture taken with the hummingbird.

To make the event a success, we need your help. Please volunteer an hour or two of your time to help with the making of the feeders, taking pictures, and/or staffing the information table. If you would like to help, call Ed Mayfield at 382-0715 or Bill Jacobson at 382-6877. ☺

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Gordon Ewing

The Christmas Bird Count was held on December 20, 1997. Twenty-nine counters in the field saw 108 species which turns out to be about average for the 23 years that the count has been running. We saw 28,684 individual birds which is the third highest on record. One bird was new to the count, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. The following birds set new records for numbers on our count: Cattle Egret - 17, White-winged Dove - 7294, and Mourning Dove - 5405. Unfortunately we missed seeing the following regulars, Common Moorhen (seen on all of our counts except this one) and Sage Sparrow (missing on only one other count).

It was a good year, considering the weather was miserable and we had no major invasions such as last year's Red Crossbills. ☺

BIRDATHON 1998

by Tim Lawton, Birdathon Coordinator

The long awaited event is just around the corner! Mark May 9 on your calendar and call Tim Lawton (522-2056) to reserve your spot on the 1998 Birdathon. This is a pay-per-bird event in which you collect pledges from people, then see how many birds you can see in a 24-hour period on the itinerary of your choice. Half of the money that we take in supports the Randall Davey Audubon Center, our state office, in Santa Fe. The other half helps support Audubon Adventures and this year for the first time we will also be purchasing bird books to contribute to Branigan Memorial Library.

Be a team leader for the thrill of designing your own Birdathon itinerary, or join a team to participate in finding the birds. It's a great chance to get out during the spring migration and see what's out there.

I have sponsor pledge sheets and lots of advice on how to twist arms. Give me a call. If you can't do Birdathon exactly on the 9th, we can be flexible as to the actual date of your 24-hour marathon. ☺

CHECK IT OFF! ON YOUR STATE TAX RETURN

Give a portion of your New Mexico State tax refund to **Share with Wildlife**, a non-profit fund dedicated to conserving nongame wildlife in New Mexico.

Although it is part of the Department of Game and Fish, the program is supported entirely by volunteer contributions through the "check off" on the state income tax forms or mailed donations. The **Share with Wildlife** program funds nongame wildlife research, habitat protection, wildlife rehabilitation, and public education. Many of these projects concern threatened and endangered species.

If you do not have a refund coming, you may donate directly to: **Share with Wildlife**, NM Department of Game & Fish, PO Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504. For more information on **Share with Wildlife**, call (505) 827-6681. ☺

PROGRAMS

ADMIT ONE

Programs and general meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month, September through April, at Good Samaritan Village Social Center, 3011 Buena Vida Cir, Las Cruces. The date and place of the May program varies. Programs begin at 7:30pm. Announcements, news, and information begin at 7pm preceding the program.

March 18. Forests Forever!

This slide show, presented by Jeremy Kruger, focuses on the Southwest Forest Alliance's vision for the conservation and restoration of National Forests in the Southwest. These forests are critical in the mission of Audubon to preserve habitat for birds and other wildlife.

April 15. The Aplomado Falcon.

Jennifer Atchley will talk about the Aplomado Falcon and her 1½ years helping on research in Northern Chihuahua, Mexico. This bird, extirpated in New Mexico, may be making a comeback.

FIELD TRIPS

New Mexico weather is changeable. Layered clothing, water, and sunscreen are always good ideas no matter what time of year you are outdoors

March 28, Saturday. Gila and Surrounding Area. This full day trip will depart at 7 AM from the KMart parking lot on N. Main St. We will have an excellent chance to observe Common Black-Hawks at our first stop, as well as Vermilion Flycatchers, Lucy's Warblers, and other returning migrants. Later, among the Sycamores at Glenwood, we should see American Dippers. Bring a lunch to picnic. Call Victor Burgett for more information at 521-7098.

April 25, Saturday. Rio Grande Valley. This half-day trip will explore the Rio Grande Valley from Mesilla to the Texas border, and will include the Old Refuge, the La Mesa area, and Durling's Farm. Returning neo-tropical migrants should be much in evidence. Meet at the KMart parking lot on N. Main St. at 6:30 AM. Picnic lunch optional. Leader TBA but you can call Victor Burgett at 521-7098 for more information.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Hatch and Uvas Valley. January 17. This trip, well attended by 18 participants, yielded a trip list of approximately 57 species. We fled the asphalt jungle at just after 7 AM, arriving at the Rio Grande bridge at Hatch about 7:30. The morning was calm and sunny. Highlights at this oft-overlooked hot spot included 14 Common Snipe, Cinnamon Teal, and a dark morph Red-tailed Hawk. A large pond on the north side of SR 26 west of Hatch sported 3 Buffleheads, 11 Long-billed Dowitchers, many other ducks, and a Merlin. Although the wind came up just before noon, we managed several Golden Eagles, about 6 Ferruginous Hawks, and a possible Rough-legged Hawk in the Uvas Valley. Lunch was had on the wind-swept grasslands and everyone agreed that it was spectacular birding for the dead of winter.

Tim Lawton, Field Trip Leader

Palomas Marsh and Animas Creek. March 21. Despite dire predictions of rain and snow, 13 birders braved sunny, 55° weather at Palomas Marsh, Palomas Pond, and lower Animas Creek. We sighted 41 species. Highlights were Western Scrub-jay, Cooper's Hawk, Yellow-headed, Brewer's, and Red-winged Blackbirds, Pied-billed Grebe, Savannah Sparrow, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, White Pelican, Say's Phoebe, Gadwall, Spotted Towhee, Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier, Brewer's Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Flicker, Cinnamon Teal, Redhead, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Verdin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Ross's Goose.

Bill Jacobson, Field Trip Leader



STATE-WIDE HUMMINGBIRD SURVEY

The New Mexico Hummingbird Connection is a wonderful way to contribute to the knowledge of hummingbirds in New Mexico while learning more about hummingbirds yourself. This all-volunteer study was started in 1995 as a means of helping us all learn more about the hummingbirds in our state. Participants are asked to watch hummingbirds in their yards at least two hours each week and to take note of what plants, feeders, or water source they are visiting, or any other observations of interest. Some participants have found nests; others have noticed courtship displays, while still others have noted how much these fascinating creatures eat.

To become part of this exciting study, send your name, address, county, city and zipcode to: New Mexico Audubon Council, 26 Dogwood Lane, Los Lunas, NM 87031. Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope and a \$5.00 donation to New Mexico Audubon Council to help with the printing costs. In March you will receive your special instructions and a packet of seeds for flowers that hummingbirds like.

This program is sponsored by the New Mexico Audubon Council, Partners in Flight, Randall Davey Audubon Center, and with assistance from New Mexico Share with Wildlife. If you have any questions, please contact Lorraine Schulte in Las Cruces (505-524-7029), Deanna Einspahr in Santa Fe (505-983-4609), Larry Arnold in Albuquerque (505-298-3665), or Eleanor Wooten (email - ewooten@zianet.com). The program fact sheet is on the Web at: <http://www.unm.edu/~bneville/nmos/hummer2.html>

We hope to hear from you about your hummingbird adventures this year.

BIRD NOTES

JAN-FEB 1998

Swamp Sparrow	Jan 10	Percha St. Park	VB
White-throated Sparrow	Jan 10	Percha St. Park	Many
Harris's Sparrow	Jan 16	Caballo Reserv.	LS
Merlin	Jan 24	Las Cruces	SH
Eastern Phoebe	Jan/Feb	Percha St. Park	Many
Lewis's Woodpecker	Feb 13	Las Cruces	SH
Northern Goshawk	Feb 15	Old Refuge	TM
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Feb	Las Cruces	KS
Broad-billed Hummingbird	Feb	Las Cruces	KS
Peregrine Falcon	Feb 20	Percha St. Park	VB
Cliff Swallow	Feb 28	Old Refuge	VB
Tree Swallow	Feb 28	Old Refuge	VB
Common Yellowthroat	Feb 28	Old Refuge	VB

Observers: V. Burgett, S. Hill, T. McKimmie, L. Schulte, K. Stinnett.

Bird Notes is compiled by Victor Burgett. Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to him by phone, 505-521-7098, or email, vburgett@nmsu.edu

**This is the time of year for migrants and returning summer residents.
Don't forget to get your sighting reports in.**

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-323-9323

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a conservation and natural history organization in southern New Mexico that promotes appreciation and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and habitat, through environmental education, issue advocacy, and natural history experiences.

OFFICERS AND BOARD

President	Bill Jacobson	382-6877
Vice president	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Secretary	Sue Hill	382-9758
Treasurer	Mary Lou Wallace	522-0684
Board (96-98)	Victor Burgett	521-7098
Board (96-98)	Margaret Morey	527-1155
Board (97-99)	Vacant	
Board (97-99)	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
Board (98-00)	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Board (98-00)	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524 7029
Audubon Council	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Delegates	Storm Sermay	382-3348
Conservation	Margaret Morey	527 1155
Education	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
Field Trips	Victor Burgett	521-7098
Membership Records	Mary Anne Thibodeau	524 4126
Membership	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Newsletter Editor	Storm Sermay	382-3348
Programs	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Publicity	Ann Heying	521-4215

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 pm at the Southwest Environmental Center, 1494A S. Solano Dr., Las Cruces NM 88001. All Audubon members are welcome.

JOIN NOW!

I would like to join the **National Audubon Society** and **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Q54
 7XCH

Membership includes the publications *Audubon* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*.

Send this application and your check (made payable to NAS) to:

**Membership, MVAS, PO Box 3127,
 Las Cruces NM 88003**

MEET A NEW BOARD MEMBER

Jennifer Atchley was the Organ Mountains field representative for the Nature Conservancy at Dripping Springs for four years. She is now the Chihuahuan Desert program officer for the World Wildlife Fund. Jennifer worked for the Portland Audubon Society during her college years and is looking forward to serving on program and conservation committees for MVAS. Jennifer has lived in Las Cruces for four years and we are fortunate to have her expertise on the board. ☺

NEW MEXICO AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETS

The next meeting of the NM Audubon Council will be Saturday, April 4, at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in Socorro. On the agenda will be discussions of the status of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken and the Aplomado Falcon, the purchase by the federal government of the Baca Location #1 in northern New Mexico, a possible riparian enhancement bill in the next state legislature, and the perennial quest for a "herps" bill. If you would like to attend the meeting or would like your ideas presented, please contact an Audubon Council delegate (listed at left.) ☺

OTHER LOCAL ACTIVITIES

The Lincoln County Bird Club will be having field trips on March 21 to Holloman Lake (call Jean Kappler at 505-336-4266 for information) and on April 18 to the Ft. Stanton area (call Tom Wolf 505-354-2006 for information.)

The Southwest Environmental Center will have a birding trip led by Harold Harrison on March 21. On April 4, Jennifer Atchley will lead a trip to look at some of our many varieties of Chihuahuan Desert cacti. A \$5 donation is requested of non-members. Call the SWEC at 522-5552 for more information or to reserve a space. ☺

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The date on your mailing label is the date your membership has or will expire. Newsletters are mailed for four months after your expiration date. If you have questions about your membership, you may call National Audubon at 800-274-4201. Address changes should be sent to NAS, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322. ☺

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Contributions are welcome. Please e-mail copy to: ssermay@zianet.com, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: APRIL 18.**

Printed by Insta-copy on 100% tree-free, chlorine-free, acid-free paper made from the kenaf plant.

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
PO Box 3127
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Nonprofit Organization
 U.S Postage Paid
 Las Cruces NM 88004
 Permit No. 609

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